

# Bike Patrol 1998



Captain Joy Citta



Sergeant Dennis Duckworth



Officer Jim Ashley



Officer Bobby Branch



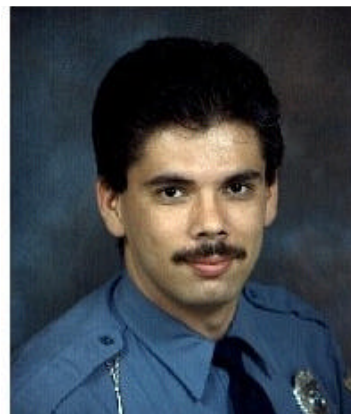
Officer Jeff Bucher



Officer Tom Duden



Officer Don Hansen



Officer Eric Meyer



1998  
The Bike Patrol in a downtown alley.

Don Hansen, Eric Meyer, Tom Duden, Jeff Bucher, Bobby Branch, Jim Ashley, Sgt. Dennis Duckworth





STACEY McKEE/Lincoln Journal Star

■ **Cracking down:** Lincoln bike patrol Officers Tom Duden (left) and Jim Ashley display a sign that will be posted throughout downtown to warn cyclists and skaters not to ride on sidewalks in designated areas.

## Police to increase sidewalk patrol

BY JASON WILLIAMS  
Lincoln Journal Star

City law prohibits bicyclists, skateboarders and inline skaters from riding on downtown sidewalks.

Now bike officers with the Lincoln Police Department are upping the ante as some violators barrel past pedestrians and run afoul of the city ordinance.

Officials are erecting 50 signs in the affected area, on Seventh to 16th streets from R and O streets and on Ninth to 16th streets from R to K streets.

"People get dumped and knocked around," downtown bike Officer Jim Ashley said last week, adding there have been some pedestrian injuries. "We got a lot of complaints from businesses."

Officers had been complaining as well.

"We have not been making any headway with the number of bikes," LPD Capt. Joy Citta said. To get the word out and promote voluntary compliance, officers suggested the warning signs.

Such signs would have helped Mike DeLaGarza, 35, a graduate student in history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He's lived in Lincoln for a year and didn't know about the ordinance.

DeLaGarza bikes about 16 blocks to campus because of campus parking woes.

**Any dummy knows you can't ride your bike on the sidewalk.'**

— A bicyclist whom Officer Jim Ashley stopped for riding on the sidewalk downtown.

"I had no idea people were being fined," DeLaGarza said Sunday. "Just Friday I saw some skateboarders on the sidewalk."

Signs are a good idea, he said, adding that they also should let people know where to find the city's bicycle trails.

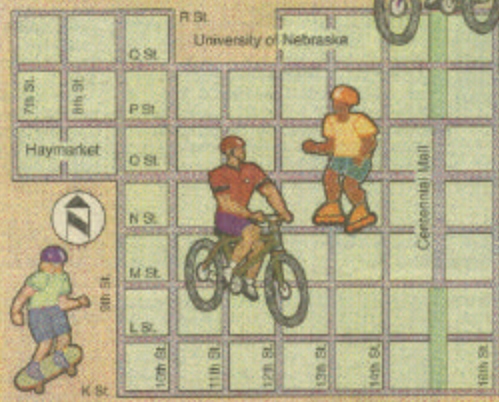
Tickets for violating the ordinance are \$5 and court costs are \$23. In some cases, officers said, people take the matter to trial in front of a judge.

"There are some who don't care and those who don't know," said Officer Tom Duden, who has been on the city's downtown bike patrol for eight years. He knows of several "repeat offenders."

Ashley and Duden were monitoring sidewalk traffic last week near 14th and P streets. While Ashley was telling a skateboarder about the law that

### No bikes allowed

City law prohibits bicyclists, skateboarders and inline skaters on downtown sidewalks in the area below. To better publicize the law, officials are erecting 50 signs in the prohibited area.



Source: Lincoln Police Department

D. MATT VAN ORBES/Lincoln Journal Star

prohibits riding on the sidewalk, a cyclist scooted behind him and turned the corner.

Moments later, another cyclist rode past on the sidewalk. Ticket book in hand, Ashley asked the rider whether he knew about the ordinance.

"Any dummy knows you can't ride your bike on the sidewalk," Ashley said the rider told him. The man asked for a warning. Ashley gave him a ticket.

At times, officers blow their

whistles and get into short bike pursuits.

A few months ago, Ashley stopped a bicyclist on a sidewalk at 12th and P streets. After Ashley said he would write a ticket, the man fled through an alley, Ashley said. As he sped away, the cyclist kept looking backward and ultimately wiped out. He was caught and arrested.

"Instead of a \$5 ticket, he ended up going to jail. It doesn't happen very often," Ashley said.



# Police set sights on sidewalk bicyclists

BY JAKE BLEED  
Senior staff writer

"If you can't stand the way I drive," a common bumper sticker says, "stay off the sidewalk."

But bicycle riders downtown must stay off the sidewalk to avoid more than crazy drivers: This week Lincoln police will begin posting 50 signs throughout downtown warning riders to stay off the sidewalk or risk a fine.

Rollerskaters and skateboarders must also avoid downtown's pedestrian pathways, including the south side of R Street.

The city ordinance against riding on sidewalks dates from October 1960, but recent increases in bicycle-related offenses downtown triggered the posting of the signs, Police Capt. Joy Citta said.

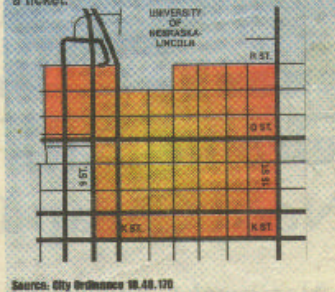
If a person rides on a sidewalk, city ordinance 10.48.170 states, he "shall do so at his own risk and shall yield the right-of-way to any and all pedestrians."

Last year, police issued 202 bike offense citations in the center team area, which includes downtown and surrounding areas.

Officer Katherine Finnell said the majority of the citations issued were against side-

## Move It!

Bikeriders, rollerskaters and skateboarders must stay off the sidewalk between 7th and 16th streets between R and O streets and Ninth and 16th streets between R and K streets. If stopped in the area, they face getting a ticket.



Source: City Ordinance 10.48.170

MATT HANEY/DN

walk riders. The remainder were against riders violating traffic signals or for interfering with traffic.

Riders must avoid holding on to moving

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# Police set sights on bicyclists

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vehicles and use at least one hand while riding. Riders in groups must ride in single file.

E.J. Green, a junior English major, said he rode his bike daily and agreed with the idea of leaving the sidewalks for pedestrians if riders were given space on the streets.

"Bikers should have their own lane, basically," Green said. "I ride on the sidewalk because I'm afraid of getting hit. I think people in cars here have an adversarial relationship with bikers."

Green said he had avoided being cited while riding his bike downtown, but he said he was cited last year for riding his skateboard on a downtown sidewalk and paid about \$40.

Many riders use downtown sidewalks, Green said, including police bicycle patrols.

"I see the bike police riding on the sidewalk all the time," Green said. "I don't think they set a good example."

University of Nebraska-Lincoln student Chris Schultz said he rode on sidewalks downtown because he felt unsafe riding on the streets.

"People in cars, they don't care," Schultz said.

Schultz said he rides to campus from his home at 28th and Q streets daily.

UNL's parking problems may cause more students to bike to campus, leading to more traffic on downtown streets and sidewalks.

Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady said the return of students to Lincoln this fall put more riders on downtown streets, many of whom might be unfamiliar with Lincoln's laws.

Last September, police issued 59 citations for bicycle offenses, more than any other month last year.

The ordinance applies to more than downtown and the Haymarket area.

Riders must also stay off the sidewalk on Havelock Avenue between 61st and 63rd streets, on 48th Street between Baldwin and Madison avenues and between Prescott and Cooper streets, and 66th Street between Holdrege and Fairfax.





Lincoln Police Department's Bike Patrol continues the tradition of leading the Star City Parade. 1998 photo.



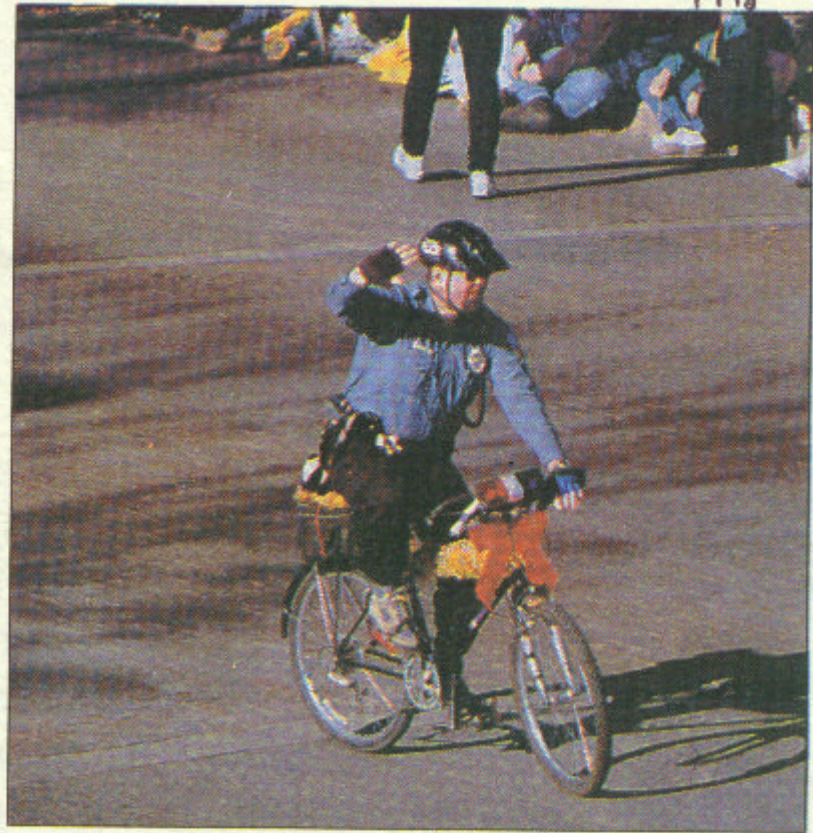
# This time, police get a citation

The Lincoln Police Department is the recipient of the 1997 Star City Holiday Festival Board of Directors Special Trophy, honoring the department's work in making the parade what Executive Director Cindi Zuby calls "one of the safest and most well-managed events (in) the city."

Zuby said police begin their work before the parade, advising her on ideas that will (or won't work) for parade entries and for the routing and staging of the parade.

LPD then escorts parade floats from the workshop to the staging area, directs traffic around the parade route and works directly with the up to 85,000 participants and audience members the morning of the parade. An honor guard of bicycle patrol members will lead the parade, riding decorated bikes. Throughout, officers work with the public to keep the massive event running smoothly.

As an example of how well they do the job, Zuby described a scene from last year: Capt. Joy Citta, weapons on her belt and a Santa cap on her head, spent 25 minutes before the parade talking to the audience, explaining her job and interacting with the crowd. Later, a damaged balloon had to be removed from the parade before it reached the TV zone. Zuby turned to Citta and informed her that the 600 people on



STAR CITY HOLIDAY FESTIVAL

An honor guard of Lincoln Police Department bicycle patrol members will lead Saturday's parade, recognizing the role police play in planning and directing the annual event.

the block behind them needed to move. Citta addressed the onlookers and, Zuby said, "They parted like the Red Sea." The injured inflatable made a smooth exit and the show went on.

"It was amazing how it was done," said Zuby. "It was because they had such a good rapport with the crowd."

Zuby noted that LPD is just one of many city departments that cooperate to make the parade

and festival successful.

"All of the city crews are like that," she explained. "It's not one crew that's better than others."

For example, Parks and Recreation workers start setting up bleachers at 5 a.m. Transportation crews work to close streets. "They all work together," said Zuby. "It's not just the police." The special trophy is given this year to recognize the vital role of LPD officers.